



The South Coast Orchid Club Inc. Gazette

October 1997

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Congratulations to all who participated in the Spring Show.

NEXT MEETING:

October 14th 1997 Calvary Lutheran Church Hall, Windsong Crt, Morphett Vale. Benching of plants to be completed by 7-45pm for judging. Meeting commences at 8pm.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Philip Smoult, from Smoults Mobile Horticultural Supplies will address the meeting and demonstrate his many and varied products. Philip will have products for sale.

HALL SET-UP:

Members willing to help please be at the Hall by 7pm.

DAYTIME CHAPTER:

2pm. Thursday 16th October 1997 at South Brighton Community Hall, Dover Square Reserve, Broadway, South Brighton. Moss Bray will address the meeting



**SPRING SHOW
CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSES**

GRAND CHAMPION

Cymbidium Wallara 'Jupiter'

M. & R. Bray

RESERVE CHAMPION

Dtps. Orglade's Puff hybrid

K.H. Northcote

Champion Open Division

Cym. Wallara

M. & R. Bray

Champion First Division

Paph.hirsutissimum

R. & I. Parish

Champion Second Division

Paph. Pop Monkhouse

H. Herrmann

Champion Standard Cym.

Wallara

M. & R. Bray

Champion Intermediate Cym.

Tumba Rumba

S. Ng

Champion Miniature Cym.

Sarah Jean

K. Northcote

Champion Odont/Oncidium

McIna. Pagan Lovesong

J.&J.Jacobson

Champion Cattleya

Blc. Sylvia Fry

R.& B.Wilson

Champion Australian Nat.

(Tooloon x Peter) hybrid

B. Fisher

Dendrobium

Snowflake

M. & S. Steele

Champion Zygopetalum

Advance Australia

P.& G. Fenton

Champion Paphiopedilum

Pop Monkhouse

H. Hermann

Champion Phalaenopsis

Dtps.Orglade's Puff Hybrid

K.H.Northcote

Champion Genera Not Yet Listed
Species

Masd. Falcata
speciosum

G.& M.Voskamp
D. Biebrick

Champion Seedling

Mimi X (Wyel x Wallara)

H. Gerber

MASDEVALLIAS

Since our bus trip to Philip Altman's I've been looking out for information on *Masdevallias*. Did you know that at least half the number of species that make up this genus have been described since 1978. Many 'new' *Masd.* have been discovered in the last 10 to 15 years. 60 new species have been discovered since 1993.

MORE ORCHID TRIVIA

Did you know that in Malaysia :-

there is an orchid species that smells like rotting meat.

one species is so valuable it is sold by inches.

one orchid species has petals 80cm long.

EDIBLE ORCHIDS

As many of you are probably aware quite a few of our orchids have had other uses besides floral arrangements.

Dendrobium bigibbum, the Cooktown orchid, was used by the Aboriginals of northern Cape York Peninsular. The bark of the stems was roasted to produce yellow strips, these were used to decorate their weapons and domestic implements. The women used the strips to make chainwork belts for the men and cross shoulder bands for themselves. (Lawler, 1984.)

Dendrobium canaliculatum was also used by the Aboriginal people, this time for food. The pseudobulbs were edible when stripped of the old leaves and baked. (Lawler, 1984.)

Dendrobium discolor was used for weapons and for medical purposes.

Another orchid that we often use without even thinking of it being an orchid is vanilla.

The Aztex Indians in Mexico discovered as early as the 16th century that the seemingly incredible fruit or beans of a tropical orchid, when cured by months of heat and humidity, acquired an exotic aroma.

Not only was vanilla considered a wonderful flavouring for foods and beverages, but from the 16th to the 19th centuries it was considered to be an aphrodisiac and to have therapeutic values, good for everything from aiding digestion and preventing headaches to counteracting poisons and bites.

The Aztex called these brown beans 'tlilxochitl' the Aztex word for 'Black flower' and required Totonac Indians who produced them to give some of the finest pods to the

In 1518, while the Spanish Conquistador, Cortez, was seeking the treasures of the new world, he observed the Emperor Montezuma enjoying a royal beverage of vanilla scented chocolate.

He was so impressed by this kingly drink that when he and his men returned to Europe they bought bags of cocoa and vanilla along with the gold, silver, and jewels of Montezuma's fallen empire.

Within half a century after Cortez made his discovery, Spanish factories were preparing vanilla-flavoured chocolate and for sometime Europeans continued to use vanilla only in combination with the cocoa bean.

In 1602, however, vanilla began to be used as a flavouring on its own, the suggestion of Queen Elizabeth's

apothecary, Hugh Morgan.

Since then vanilla has soared in popularity, making it far more popular than chocolate or any other flavour known before or since. For more than 300 years after its discovery by Cortez, vanilla was produced only in its native Mexico.

Plantings were tried in many countries, but the delicate orchid never bore fruit. The mystery was not solved until 1836, when a Belgium names Charles Morren found that common insects cannot pollinate the vanilla orchid. He observed that a tiny bee, the Melipone, that is found only in the vanilla districts of Mexico, is uniquely equipped to fertilize the plant.

The bee did not thrive outside Mexico so

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The Private Sale (at reasonable prices) of
Australian Natives, Cymbidium Seedlings,
Paphiopedilums & Cattleyas.

Books, benches, orchid growers requirements.

Reasonably priced.

October 19th, 10am(not before)- 4pm. ONLY.

T. Tormet, 35 Nelson Street, South Plympton

Morren developed a method of hand-pollination of the vanilla blossoms.

Shortly after Morren's discovery, the French started to cultivate vanilla on many of their islands in the Indian Ocean and French Oceania, East and West Indies. The Dutch planted it in Indonesia and the British in southern India.

Eventually, the French took vanilla to Reunion, an Island off Madagascar's coast. There a former slave named Edmund Albius perfected a quick and simple method of manual pollination that is still used today.

This was the impetus of major commercial cultivation in the Indian Ocean area.

Scientists specializing in biotechnology have been working for several years with Vanilla plants to improve and optimize the vanilla flavour. They use tissue culture techniques to propagate Vanilla cells with desirable flavour characteristics.

There are several varieties of vanilla, but *Vanilla planifolia* is the primary species for commerce.

It grows very well in the Bundaberg, Queensland, area where one mature vine can produce 10kg of vanilla beans per annum. Approximately 5,000 vines can be grown per acre.

Extracts from 'The Rural Guardian'
